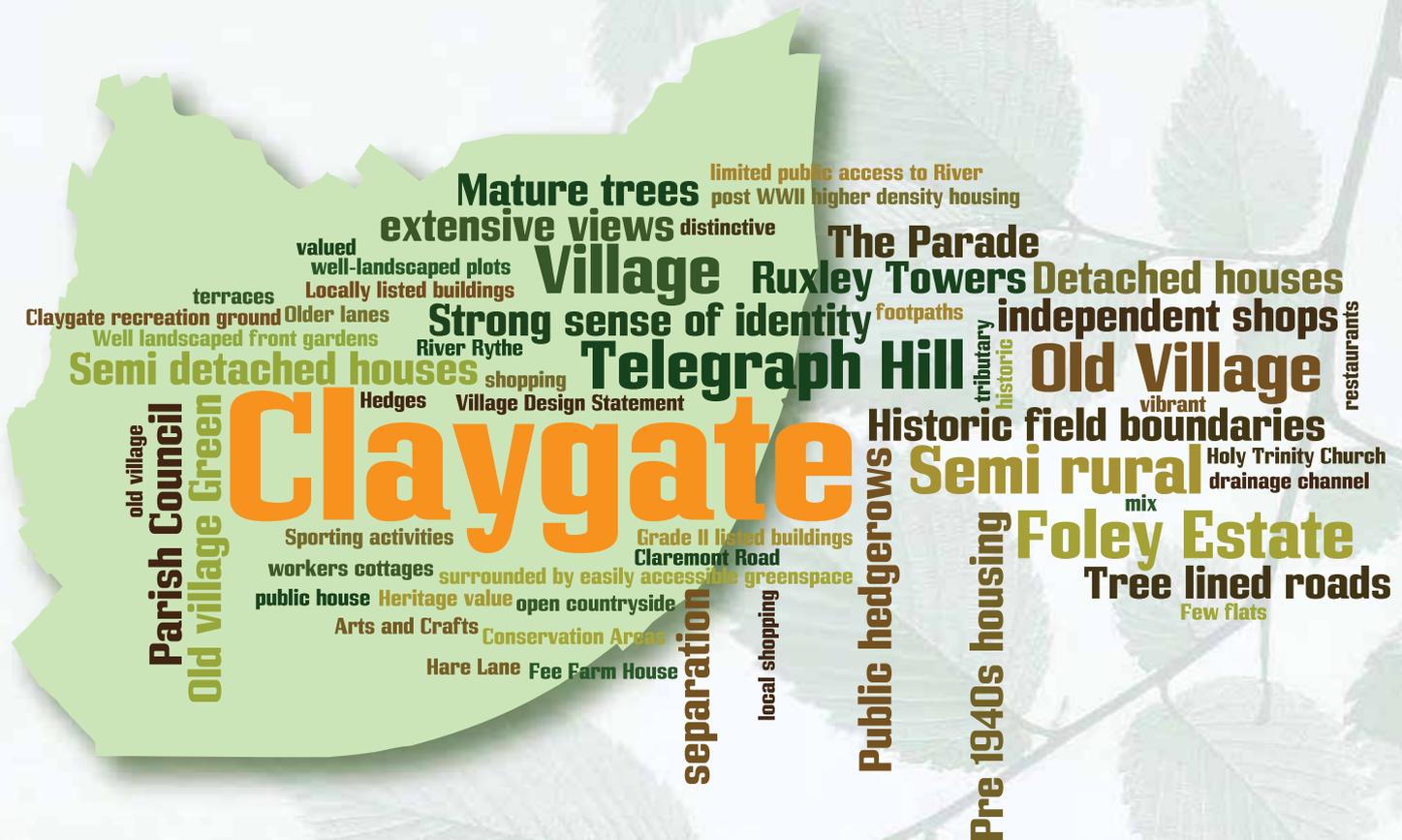




**Elmbridge**  
Borough Council  
... bridging the communities ...



**Design and Character Supplementary Planning Document**  
**Companion Guide : Claygate**

**April 2012**





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## 1 Producing the Claygate Settlement Area Character Assessment

This companion guide forms an integral part of the Elmbridge Design and Character SPD. The guides provide a reference source for considering the character of an area as part of the design process for new development.

1.1 The following Character Assessment for Claygate has been developed in partnership with the local community assisted by design consultants (Forum Heritage Services and Context 4D) and Elmbridge Borough Council.

### Community Involvement

1.2 On 25 May 2011, a community workshop was held at Claygate Village Hall, which allowed local people to talk about the character of their local area and suggest ways in which that character might be maintained and enhanced in light of future development.

1.3 Community participants included:

- 1 Liberal Democrat representative
- 1 local ward Councillor
- 4 members of Claygate Parish Council including the author of the Village Design Statement
- 1 Claygate Labour Party representative

1.4 The morning of the workshop focused on the definition of character and why it is important. As well as providing a wealth of information about their local area, community participants were instrumental in subdividing character areas and the identification of key features.



**Discussing character at the workshop**

1.5 The afternoon session concentrated on the design process explaining how the new SPD would work. Participants had the opportunity to appraise the context and setting of a site in practice using maps and site appraisal notation charts to assist them.

1.6 En route to the appraisal site, participants walked to the local centre examining local character and recent design proposals. The site chosen to appraise was a large site behind the shopping centre and presented issues of privacy to existing residential properties, creating vistas/glimpses and appropriate boundary treatment. Walking through several residential roads and the Old Village, the group were able to explain and discuss the strong village character of Claygate.

1.7 The community issues expressed at the workshop have been incorporated into the assessment within text boxes. Claygate Parish Council has also prepared a building type map that will help provide additional information for designers when considering development in Claygate.

1.8 A feedback session held on 15 September 2011 allowed participants to add any additional comments, clarification and further information.

## 2 How to use the settlement area and sub-area analysis

**Step 1:** Identify the settlement area and sub-area your development site falls within, using the character area map to help you. The maps also provide an overview of the wider context of the area.

**Step 2:** Read the introduction to the settlement area, which gives a brief overview and a summary of key features, providing you with a snapshot of settlement character and highlighting key issues identified from community workshops.

**Step 3:** Read the sub-area analysis, taking note of specific local concerns and where to find additional design guidance.

**2.1** In order to inform your design proposal, it is important to evaluate and understand the key characteristics of the settlements and their sub-areas. Understanding an area's character will help to deliver high quality development that contributes to the distinctiveness of the local area and sense of place. In order to do this effectively, the Borough has been subdivided into 8 settlement areas, reflecting those in the Core Strategy. Each settlement area has been further divided into sub-areas, derived from fieldwork and group discussions at the community workshops.

**2.2** The sub-area analysis describes its predominant characteristics such as building types, use, scale, grain, tree cover and any heritage assets. Reference may be made to specific design guidance you should take account of when considering your development proposal. In some instances, reference is also made to case studies that may be particularly relevant to the type of development likely to occur in the sub-area. These are contained within the main document and illustrate the process of understanding local character through context and site appraisal, which will generate a

design concept and indicative design. Each case study offers just one solution to how a site could be developed and there may be instances when other case studies are relevant, depending on the nature of the development.

**2.3** Where the community workshop identified specific issues affecting a particular sub-area, a box is included to highlight these concerns. This is intended to help you carefully consider the local context and the sensitivities of the site's surroundings. It provides an opportunity to show how you might address specific concerns highlighted in relation to sub-areas. These may not be exhaustive but are provided as prompts for consideration.

**2.4** For sites that fall on the edge of two sub-areas or settlement boundaries, you will need to take into account adjoining sub-areas, which may have an impact on the context of the site. In many ways the design requirements of these sites are more complex to resolve as they may be at a key transition between one type of development and another.

**2.5** You should use the settlement and sub-area analysis as a starting point to develop a clear context for your proposal. This should be considered in more detail through site visits etc, taking account of the specific location of the development site.

The analysis of character and context should be an integral part of a Design and Access Statement.

## 3 Claygate Character Assessment



### Introduction

3.1 With open countryside almost completely surrounding the urban area of Claygate, this part of the Borough feels like and functions as a separate village. Claygate has its own Parish Council which has shown a strong commitment to protecting and enhancing the local distinctiveness of the village by publishing its own Village Design Statement <sup>(1)</sup> in 2010. This was a result of a concerted community effort, led by the Parish Council over a number of years. The objective of the Village Design Statement is;

'To protect and enhance the local distinctiveness of Claygate, in respect of its built environment and landscape, through guiding new development and other changes to the environment.'

3.2 The Village Design Statement provides a detailed appraisal of the local character of the village and the surrounding open land. <sup>(2)</sup>, addressing key characteristics of the local area, which together give Claygate a unique sense of place. It is important that the character appraisals that follow are read in conjunction with the existing Village Design Statement.

3.3 Claygate Village has two distinct centres; the commercial hub of the area which is focused on 'The Parade' which leads to the station, and the old village centre (a designated conservation area) which has a more administrative role with community facilities such as the church, village hall, school, doctors surgery and sports grounds.

3.4 The housing stock predominantly ranges from large to very large semi-detached or detached houses in generous regular plots. Older more modest 'workers cottages', some terraced, survive in small pockets around the old village core and to Coverts Road. A continued theme in terms of house design is the innovation and quality of design with exemplar designs promoted at Ideal Home exhibitions, Garden City derived plans and layouts, self build projects and good examples of contemporary houses emerging in some parts of the settlement area (Ruxley Heights Estate for example).

3.5 Claygate Parish Council has developed a map that plots the different building types and ages located throughout the settlement. This provides an extra layer of information to help assist the character assessment. This can be viewed at the back of this companion guide.

3.6 The natural boundaries (often historic field boundaries), individual and groups of mature trees and pockets of green space within the urban area are striking and further emphasise the village characteristics of this part of the Borough. Mature broadleaf street trees in grass verges are a strong feature of some parts of the public realm. Elsewhere, trees in private gardens often strongly define the public highways and in places partially obscure views to houses.

1 A Village Design Statement sets out clear and simple guidance for the design of all development in a village based on its character.....It will not stop change from happening, but it can affect how any new building fits into the village. Village Design Statements are intended to influence the operation of the statutory planning system, so that new development is in harmony with its setting and makes a positive contribution to the immediate environment' The Countryside Agency

2 Village Design Statement, sections 2-4

## Summary of Key features

- Well-defined edges to the settlement area with only limited development onto the open countryside landscape setting
- Clearly defined 'gateway' at Hare Lane Green with a sense of entering and leaving Claygate.
- Vehicular access is restricted to three key routes
- Well-used local centre with a wide variety of independent shops
- Some well-defined residential areas in places (Foley Estate, Ruxley Heights Estate).
- General predominance of pre 1940s housing characterised by large detached and semi detached houses on large well landscaped plots, interspersed with post WWII higher density housing with smaller gardens.
- Areas of bungalow type housing rarely seen elsewhere in the Borough (Glenavon Close)
- There is some flatted development, usually adjacent to or set within commercial areas such as the station environs and the Old Village
- Some very high quality examples of houses influenced by the Arts and Crafts movement (Foley Estate)
- Large number of mature trees, historic field boundaries and older lanes and footpaths giving a very rural feel to some parts of the settlement area
- Generally open aspect to residential development with space between and around houses significantly contributing to the character of the built form
- The majority of houses within Claygate have softened front boundaries of natural vegetation; hedges and small trees greatly adding to the perception of a very green semi-rural settlement

**3.7** Extensive views to open countryside particularly to the south of the settlement area (from Claremont Road and Gordon Road) and across the urban area from Telegraph Hill in the north

- Landmarks are Holy Trinity and Ruxley Towers (especially when viewed from Telegraph Hill but also seen from the A3)
- Tree lined roadsides are a strong characteristic of some parts of the settlement area, elsewhere trees in private gardens often define the roadside
- Good footpath access (often historic routes) to open countryside
- Developing upon an historic reputation for good contemporary and innovative design (recent houses in Ruxley Heights are good examples)

### Issues identified from the Community Workshops

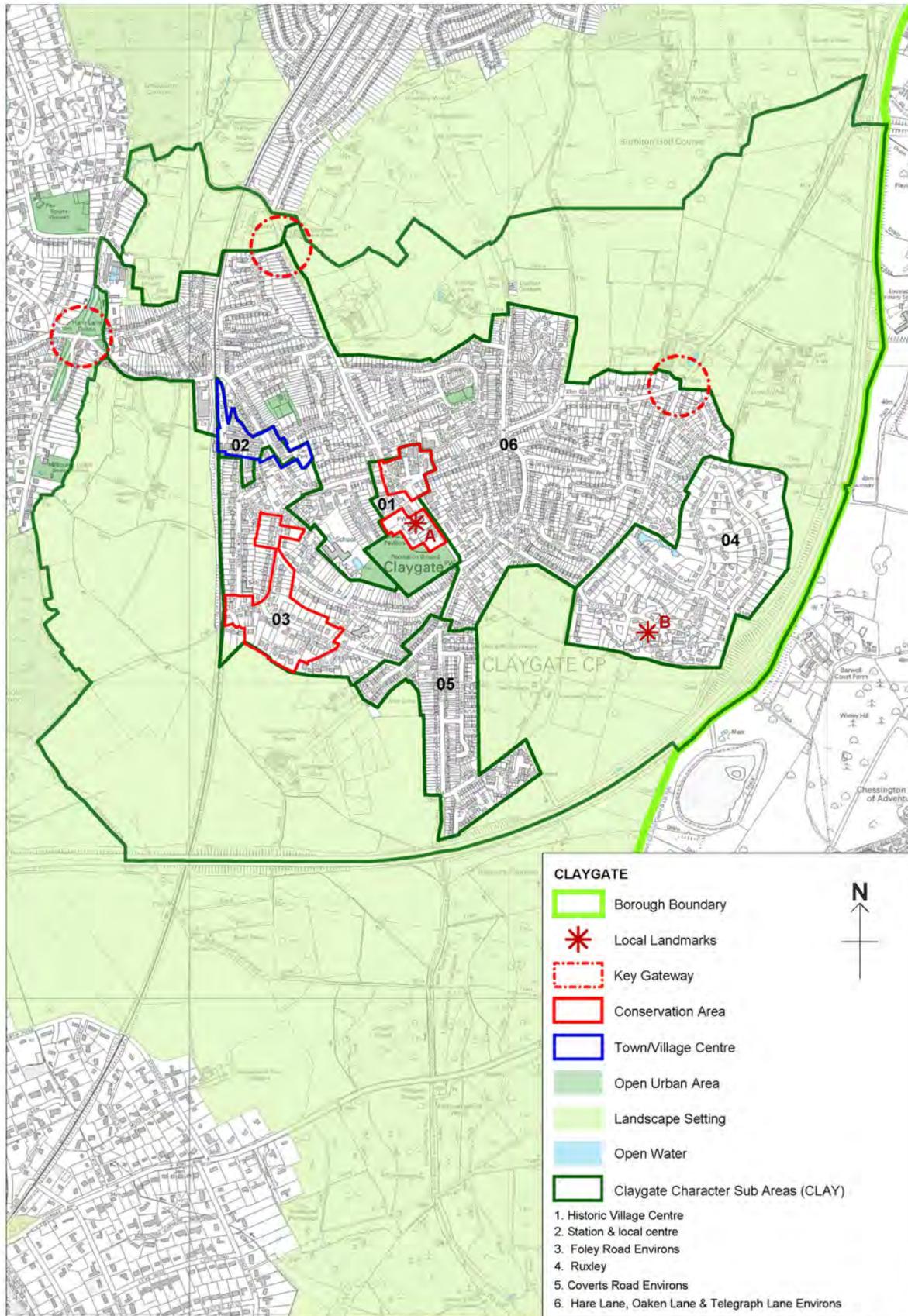
- **There was general concern that the commercial core had shifted from High Street to 'The Parade' and although the two areas perform different roles it is important for both to retain their historic features and overall character**
- **Concerns expressed over the potential loss of trees in public and private realm.**
- **The use of front gardens for parking was seen as having a significant impact on the character of residential areas particularly in the higher density smaller scale developments**

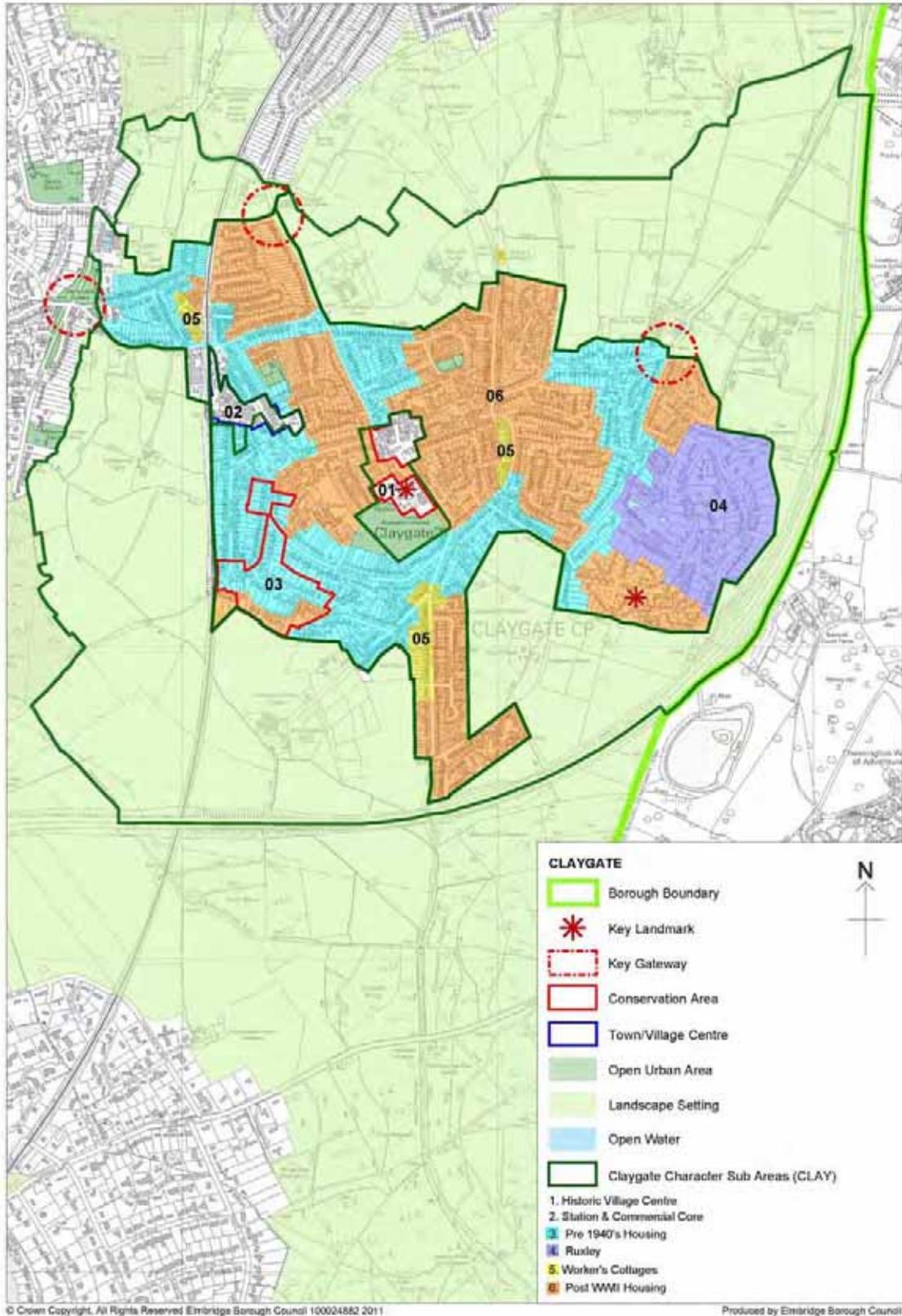
### Local Landmarks

As featured in the settlement map.

- A. Holy Trinity Church, Church Road
- B. Ruxley Tower, Tower Gardens

**3.8** The following map can be viewed in more detail using the Council's interactive mapping system 'My Elmbridge' which is located on the Elmbridge Borough Council homepage.





This map has been developed by Claygate Parish Council and divides Claygate by building type and age, providing an extra layer of information.

## The Sub-areas

### CLAY01: Historic village centre

#### Overview

3.9 The majority of the historic village centre has Conservation Area status. <sup>(3)</sup>

3.10 There is an attractive mix of historic buildings defining 'The Green' which is located in the centre of the village sub area.

3.11 The area includes a public house, a number of shops which still retain Victorian features and a group of late 19<sup>th</sup> century cottages which have been complemented by later development which reflects the style, massing and scale of the older group.



**View looking east towards The Green, Old Village**

3.12 This area acts as the administrative centre of the settlement area with the community focus around the church and Village Hall. There is also a youth centre and doctors surgery.

3.13 The sports grounds and pavilion to the south further emphasise this area as the 'heart' of the village.

3.14 Buildings on 'The Green' play a very important role in maintaining the village scale and grain of this part of the settlement area.

3.15 Buildings are two storey, some mixed use with shops at ground floor level.

3.16 There is also variation to the way buildings address the street frontage with an attractive mix of pitched and gable roofs adding interest and punctuation to the roof lines.



**North side of The Green showing the varied roof form which enlivens the townscape**

3.17 Buildings to the west of Church Road south of 'The Green' are generally on a larger scale with the church, village hall, offices and flatted development (also seen to the east side) generally defining the coarser grain of this part of the sub-area.

3.18 Mature trees relieve some of the impact of these larger footprint buildings on the finer grain of the village core to the north.

3.19 As with most of the settlement area, trees greatly enhance the character of the streetscene with mature trees to the front and rear of properties and on 'The Green'.

3.20 Trees are often 'structural' in their positioning to roadsides where they form local landmarks on travelling through this part of Claygate. They often close views along streets, such as the view looking north-west along High Street towards Oaken Lane.



**Trees to Oaken Lane close the view north from The Green**

#### Specific issues raised at the Community Workshop

- New buildings need to respect the open character, mature trees, low height and scale of buildings in this part of Claygate
- Concern regarding the poor treatment of traditional shop fronts

#### Opportunities

**3.21** The conservation area designation, the setting of the listed buildings, and the presence of a large number of important trees, make the area particularly sensitive to development and all will require careful consideration in the design of any development proposals. <sup>(4)</sup>

**3.22** Due to this and the established nature of this sub-area, future development is likely to be limited to small householder modifications and infill development. For householder improvements please refer to the **Home Extensions Companion Guide**.

**3.23** Advice contained in the general design guidance section will prove helpful with regard to designing minor infill development.

**3.24** To address the specific issue with regards to designing shop fronts, care is needed when considering materials and detailing. Traditional shop fronts should be retained.

#### CLAY02: Station and local centre

##### Overview

**3.25** The building in 1885 of Claygate Station refocused activity away from the historic village centre.

**3.26** The Parade was a purpose built mixed use venture of shops and services to the ground floor and accommodation above.

**3.27** It remains today a successful group of independent retailers boasting a butcher, fishmonger, greengrocer, baker, shoe repairs and newsagent amongst others with restaurants and cafés catering for local people.

**3.28** It is complemented by a small supermarket in Hare Lane which has expanded the successful mixed use area eastwards.

**3.29** The built form varies between two and three storey often with the use of half dormers or dormers for upper storeys.

**3.30** There is much articulation to the facades with the use of projecting bays, gables and corner turrets.

**3.31** Much of the architectural detailing of these buildings has also survived.



**Architectural detailing to shops, The Parade**

**3.32** Street trees add to the high quality of the townscape, where careful management of on-street parking also helps to maintain an uncluttered and pedestrian friendly public realm whilst still enabling vehicle access.

### **Opportunities**

**3.33** Development within this part of Claygate is likely to take the form of replacement buildings with some of the retail units having the potential to accommodate residential units above shops.

**3.34** **Case studies CS4, CS5 and possibly CS6** will be of most relevance to proposals for change within this sub-area.

**3.35** For specific advice on commercial development please refer to **section 6**.

### **CLAY03: Foley Road environs**

#### **Overview**

**3.36** This sub-area forms part of the early expansion of Claygate.

**3.37** It comprises a series of roads set in an informal grid pattern partially defined by the path of the railway with generally very large detached houses set in wide and deep regular plots.

**3.38** Part of the area is designated as The Claygate (Foley Estate) Conservation Area. <sup>(5)</sup>

**3.39** What is striking and a strong part of the character of the sub-area is the architectural quality of the built form.

**3.40** Many of the houses have strong Arts and Crafts influences with the careful use of traditional materials relating to the Surrey vernacular; red brick, timber framing and clay tiles.

**3.41** Roofs are hugely expressive as are chimneys and the massing of houses is carefully articulated through the roof design so as to reduce its impact on the streetscene.



**Houses to Claremont Road, Claygate**

**3.42** The presence of mature street trees and trees and hedges to front and rear gardens is of great significance to the overall character of this part of Claygate.

**3.43** Houses are often partially obscured and/or framed by vegetation adding to the quality of the public and private realm.



**View looking west along Beaconsfield Road**

**3.44** The views from the roads south out to open countryside are a very attractive part of the character of the sub-area.

**3.45** Distant woodland which often frames built form or is glimpsed between houses adds to the sense of being at the edge of the urban expansion of Claygate. This is particularly apparent along Claremont Road and from the footbridge over the railway line.



**View from the footbridge at the western end of Claremont Road**

### Specific issues raised at the Community Workshop

- Poor house extensions which often double the size of the existing house
- Extensions and replacement buildings proximity to boundaries creating in some cases a 'terracing effect' to the detriment of the character of individual properties and the street as a whole

### Opportunities

**3.46** Development within this part of the settlement area is likely to include extensions to existing properties or in some cases replacement properties.

**3.47** **Case Study CS1** will be particularly relevant when considering this type of development.

**3.48** For further advice relating to extensions and alterations to existing properties, please see the **Home Extensions Companion Guide**.

### CLAY04: Ruxley

#### Overview

**3.49** The sub-area comprises the private estate of Ruxley Heights and to the south Ruxley Ridge which includes the Grade II listed Ruxley Towers (currently used as a dwelling), a local landmark of some distinction, given its 15<sup>th</sup> century Tudor Gothic style.

**3.50** The houses are formally and informally orientated with a varied building line in places but generally large plots with buildings set back from the roadside.

**3.51** Plots are generally tree and hedge lined with houses often partially and occasionally fully obscured from view by natural landscaping.



**Houses to Ruxley Crescent**

**3.52** A widely varied topography adds interest to the pattern of development and often means houses are split level within their site.

**3.53** Houses are mostly two storey but with modern replacements increasing the scale often to two and a half storey.

**3.54** There is an individuality to the architectural style of houses to this part of the sub-area and this diversity of style (including contemporary additions) adds to the quality of the built form.

**3.55** There is a higher density of development to Ruxley Ridge and more reliance on standard house types and repeated plan layout bring more homogeneity to this part of the sub-area.



**Houses to Ruxley Ridge**

## Opportunities

**3.56** Development to this part of the settlement area is likely to take the form of replacement houses or possibly sub-division of plots. Please refer to **Case Studies CS1 and CS2** for further advice.

## CLAY05: Coverts Road environs

### Overview

**3.57** This area is entirely residential and set out on a high density with a relatively fine grain.

**3.58** Some of the older houses to this former lane are of a modest cottage scale, with larger turn of the century semi-detached houses and further development into the inter-war and post-war periods.

**3.59** All are two storey, restrained in their architectural style and displaying a broad palette of materials.



**Houses to Vale Road**

**3.60** In contrast to much of the rest of the settlement area there is far less tree cover to front gardens, although some mature trees are present and form important local landmarks.



**Trees to Coverts Road**

**3.61** There is however extensive woodland to the east of Coverts Road (and Foxwarren) and this is often seen above houses or through gaps in the street frontage.

**3.62** There has been significant replacement of front gardens with hard standings for cars and other vehicles. This, together with on street parking, has had a major impact on the character of Coverts Road especially with regards to the older houses in the street.



**Replacement of front gardens with parking spaces, Foxwarren**

### **Opportunities**

**3.63** Development is likely to be limited in this sub-area given its already established high densities, and would take the form of replacement buildings or the amalgamation of plots.

**3.64** **Case Studies CS1 and CS2** are likely to be of most relevance to the likely development scenario.

### **CLAY06: Hare Lane, Oaken Lane and Telegraph Lane environs**

#### **Overview**

**3.65** This sub-area is a large and complex predominantly residential area (but with some associated residential uses such as a care home and a young persons high dependency unit), which has been developed as a series of small to medium development parcels, generally of no more than 50 dwellings.

**3.66** Part of the distinctive character of this large sub-area is its subtle variation throughout between pre-1940s housing characterised by large detached and semi detached houses on large well landscaped plots, and post WWII higher density housing with smaller gardens. See the Claygate Parish Council map at the back of the assessment for more information.

**3.67** The subtle variation adds to the character of this residential area although it is not so strongly defined as to warrant separate sub-areas. This, however, does not diminish its quality but rather is one of the strong characteristics of Claygate - its subtle and complementary variation throughout the residential suburbs.

**3.68** These areas of pre and post-war development, often adjacent and sometimes seen along the same road, are interspersed with small pockets of older 'workers cottages' and larger Edwardian terrace housing.

**3.69** However, most development shares a number of common characteristics: it is generally detached or semi-detached (there is some short terracing to Roundway), set back from the road in small gardens with front boundaries; two storey (with the exception of Glenavon Close and other isolated groups of bungalows); inter-war or post-war (with pockets of earlier groups of mostly Edwardian houses), set in deep regular sized plots.

**3.70** Buildings generally have shared building lines within roads, following the line of the roadside be this straight (principal routes and the older lanes) or cranked (additional cul-de-sac and crescents, mostly inter-war and post-war in date).



**St Leonard's Road**



**The Roundway**



**Loseberry Road**

**3.71** An important and generally consistent characteristic to the public realm is the presence of street trees at least to some part of most roads.



**Street trees to Hare Lane**

**3.72** A less common and perhaps more significant feature is the presence of brick pavements to some streets within the settlement area. These provide a locally distinctive feel to these parts of Claygate and are a valuable and increasingly rare surface treatment in this part of Surrey.



**Brick pavements - Torrington Road**

### Specific issues raised at the Community Workshop

- Concern regarding loss of boundary hedges to Oaken Lane (originally supplemented by Elm trees subsequently lost to Dutch Elm disease)
- Commuter parking along Aston Road and other roads within the proximity of the station was changing the character of some roads from quiet uncluttered semi-rural residential roads to having a harder urban feel.

### Opportunities

**3.73** Part of the essential character of the village is its consistency of scale, grain and massing across the various areas of Claygate with little that interrupts this townscape rhythm. In this respect new development opportunities are limited.

**3.74** In the event that development opportunities do arise **Case Study CS3**, and possibly limited plot subdivision **Case Study CS2**, could offer appropriate design guidance.

**3.75** The replacement of existing residential buildings (**Case Study CS1**) should give careful consideration to boundary treatments and retaining sensible and appropriate separation distances between houses so as to avoid a terracing effect and maintain the open character which is seen throughout the residential areas of Claygate.